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FIRST RIPE FRUIT GATHERED.



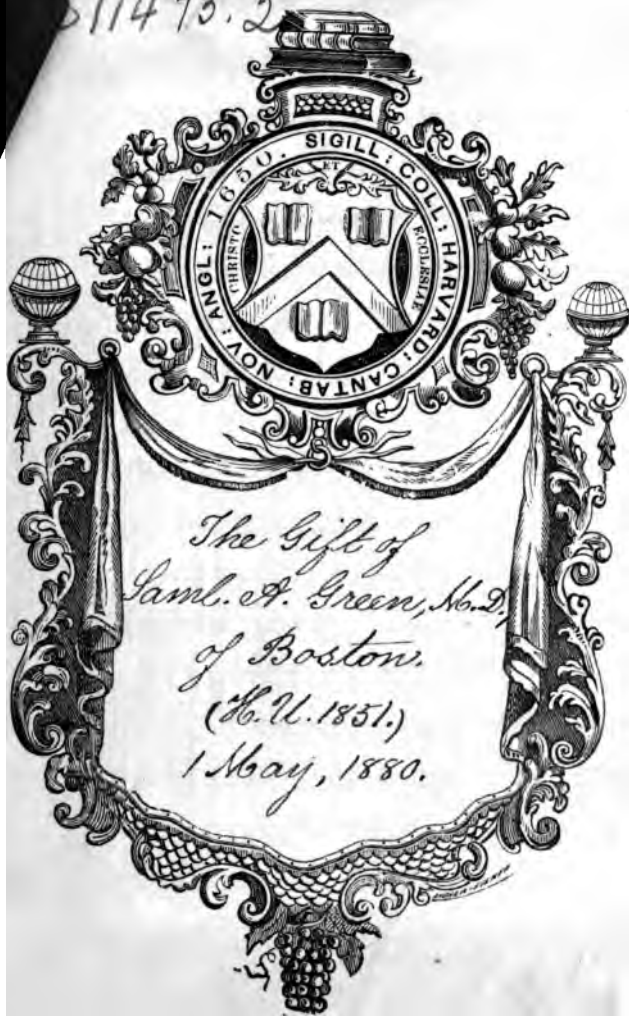
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First Ripe Fruit Gathered:

A

PASTORAL SKETCH

OF A

YOUNG LAWYER.

By John White Snickerling

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8 PORTLAND: C  
SANBORN & CARTER.  
1859.



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## DEDICATION.

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To the Young Men's Christian Association, of Portland :

DEAR SIRS AND BRETHREN, —

To whom, more fitly than to yourselves, can I inscribe this sketch, mostly from his own pen, of one of the Christian young men of Portland ?

He sustained that character only a short time ; but he sustained it well.

May you, through grace, do still better ; and, by the will of Providence, labor longer for the Master.

And, when all the ripe fruits are gathered, may we be in the garner.

Yours in our One Lord,

J. W. CHICKERING.

PORTLAND, April, 1859.



## FIRST RIPE FRUIT GATHERED.

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THERE was, in High street church as elsewhere, during most of the year 1858, a season of spiritual refreshing.

Those that were already planted in the house of the Lord, flourished with fresh verdure in the courts of our God. They brought forth fruit, even in old age. And many new plants of righteousness adorned the garden of the Beloved, who came, with the "north wind

and the south," to refresh its foliage and enjoy its pleasant fruits.

Among the earliest harbingers of that spiritual spring-time, — cotemporaneous with the natural Spring, — was the clear and joyful conversion to Christ, of Mr. ENOCH LINCOLN CUMMINGS.

Joyful to himself; for seldom is the joy of faith better exemplified. Joyful to the churches; whose members, already awaking to new fervor of desire, received this, as a new encouragement to prayer. Joyful to the angels; who, rejoicing over any repenting sinner, doubtless have special satisfaction, in special proofs of divine power and grace, and in the consecration of special agencies for good.

Now that our joy is so soon partly turned to sorrow, and his joy perfected with the angels', it seems fitting to review his brief career as a Christian. If its beginning and end were remarkable; hardly less so was its steady, upward, useful course. And while no one should wait for its precise counterpart in his own case, yet all Christians, and all others, may learn something from the lesson which the Master taught him.

The query: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" may have occurred to some, when the voice of this young and worldly lawyer was first heard in childlike prayer and earnest exhortation. If so, it was not on account of any hostility or

settled disbelief he had ever shown towards the Gospel.

He had received early parental and other instruction in the great truths of the Bible. His parents were members of the Baptist church in Paris, Maine. After the death of his father, Col. Simeon Cummings, a mother's instructions and prayers, though not then appreciated, continued to follow her son, till she had the joy of seeing him a child of God; and the mingled joy and sorrow of witnessing his early translation to his Father's house above.

He had enjoyed every opportunity for classical and professional education, graduating at Harvard University in 1845,

and completing his law studies with Messrs. Willis & Fessenden. His professional standing and prospects, and his new position in the community as a Christian, are thus appropriately alluded to, by a writer in one of the daily papers:

“Had his life been spared, and an opportunity been given for the fullest development of his powers, he would have attained a high rank in his profession, to which his habits of industry and studious perseverance were steadily but surely leading him.

“But dear as is the professional tie which bound him to his associates in life, there is a closer and more enduring fellowship, to which our departed brother was



not a stranger, and to which surviving friends now turn spontaneously in the hour of their bereavement. The last year of his life has been one of Christian activity and usefulness, which makes up his brightest record, and erects a monument over his grave, more enduring, and of more value, than the highest honors of professional life."

His domestic happiness, and the shadow now cast upon the brightness of his dear home circle, are themes too sacred for public perusal, even were this a biography, instead of a mere sketch of his brief *religious* life.

In that aspect, he had not been known, up to that last year, except as a kind

parishioner, and a candid hearer of the Word, and as not unwilling to converse and read on the great subject.

The following extracts from a letter to a Christian friend, will show his progress towards Gospel light and peace :

PORTLAND, February 11, 1858.

I was very much interested in your letter, and am rejoiced at your great happiness in the Savior. I wish I could speak with the warmth and rejoicing of soul with which you seem to be filled. You are right in your feelings and experience.

There is nothing on earth worth living

for, unless connected with the service of our Heavenly Father; and then, this life even is beautiful and joyous. To live here in this cold world with the love of the Savior in one's heart is desirable, because then it is a pleasure to breast all the storms of adversity, and stand firmly up against the trials of life, *because God wills it so.*

It is for this, for these trials, and adversities, that we are placed here. In overcoming and patiently bearing them, we form our characters, and with God's help fit ourselves for a life with Him hereafter. Just as the gold is polished by constant rubbing, so our souls are purified and perfected by conflicts and struggles when rightly borne.

The death of dear B——, hard as it is to bear, and full of keen sorrow and anguish as it is to me, has, under Providence, been greatly blessed to some at least of those who survive. I know that my feelings and views have been much influenced and changed; I hope in some respects for the better.

Although I have not been without feeling, for a year or two past, upon religious matters, yet the subject has never been before so brought home to my soul, as since his death. And though I am now far from living as I ought, yet I take comfort in things which before were not agreeable to me, and enjoy a communion which is far nearer than ever before, with

my Heavenly Father; and I mean with His help to press forward.

But I did not commence this letter to speak of myself particularly, I do not feel strong enough yet to make any professions of well-doing—I feel as if we are powerless (I know by experience that we are) to do any good thing of ourselves. No man or woman need ever expect to work *themselves* into a nearness to God unless they first, through prayer and throwing themselves on the mercy of God, induce a faith and trust in His goodness; then by His aid they can do much.

But even then, in this world of temptation, they must always come very far

short of doing their whole duty. The human heart is desperately wicked and always prone to go wrong. The life of the Christian must be one of constant battling against temptations and human infirmities. How true it is that "when we would do good, evil is present with us."

But we are here for this very purpose. By every evil passion and every temptation overcome, the soul gains strength to grapple with the next; so to the end of life if we continue the warfare so long.

In this light it is easy to perceive how much that soul has accomplished in its real development, by a life of victorious struggle, and it is for this gain that God

has surrounded us with perils on every hand. He might as easily have created us in a world where soul efforts against sin would have been unnecessary—but then where would have been the individuality of the soul? where the personality, and where then free will or agency?

I think we may well conclude that He hath “done all things well,” and that He always does right, although at times it does not seem so to our short sight, and it is probable that He does not always intend that we shall see through His ways, because He is an exacting God (in a good sense of the term,) as to our *faith, confidence and trust* in Him. He wants His children to confide in Him—to have

confidence in Him, so that we may always believe He is right, although we cannot see how and why, and He exacts this of every human soul who would enjoy His presence and consolations ; “ without faith it is impossible to please God.”

In many things we must believe, because God says so ; although in many others He has given us, through our reason and understanding, to add our mental acquiescence to our faith.

I miss dear B—— every day of my life. I sometimes feel as if he would come back again. But that cannot be ; we must all taste the cup which he drank, we must all go to him, but he can never come to us in this world.



We know not how soon we may some or all of us be called to go. I trust we shall all meet him in a better world. Oh what a glorious meeting we will have!"

He was first ripe, and gathered. May all his hopes for friends be fulfilled.

Evidently, he had not yet fully learned CHRIST; nor begun to rely on His perfect righteousness as the ground of pardon and reconciliation.

If he saw Jesus at all with the eye of faith, it was dimly, like the man just recovered from blindness, who saw men, as trees, walking.

Yet a charming spirit of humility and earnestness breathes in his language.

And we may, with the more comfort, leave the question undecided as to his spiritual state at that time, in view of the full and satisfactory evidence soon after furnished, that he had found Him who is the way, and the truth, and the life.

For a narrative of the feelings and events preceding and attending his conversion, we are so happy as to have his own words, written with the fulness and simplicity of Christian friendship, in the yet unchilled glow of his first love to the Savior.

Providentially, a copy was at hand for the funeral occasion. And though the

letter, as read over his remains, possessed an interest to a crowded assembly of friends, which it can hardly retain when read in print by strangers, yet some hearts may find a fresh glow of love enkindled, or a first emotion of trust in the "precious Savior" awakened, by its perusal.

PORTLAND, TUESDAY MORNING, }  
March 21, 1858. }

DEAR —: Here I am, alone in my office this stormy morning; and my feelings are such that I must talk to somebody, and so through this imperfect medium of pen and paper I am going to talk to you. And my theme is *Jesus*;

that blessed Jesus who died that we might live. By this time you are doubtless asking, "what does this mean?" This sounds strange, coming from one who you know has been somewhat skeptical as to any particular or special change. But my reason for talking thus is, *I have found a Savior.*

You asked me in your last letter to tell you particularly how I felt—I did not do so because I could say nothing special as to my religious feelings; but now I can speak to you of the dear Jesus. My heart at this moment burns and glows with love to his blessed name. Jesus! the name is dear and precious to my soul.

Now bear with me while I tell you a little of my past and present feelings and experience. For a long time previous to the death of my dear brother, I had been thoughtful, as to matters of eternity, and prayerful for light and experience. Dear B. was laid low on a bed of sickness—the proud man was humbled—the sinning soul at last rejoiced in the dear Savior. Death ended the scene. That scene stamped my own soul with new views and feelings. It showed me the utter powerlessness of human strength. It taught me the power of Christ, it impressed me with the utter worthlessness and uncertainty of this life. It rekindled in me the dull and feeble

spark which my mother's prayers, through God's goodness, had lighted in my heart.

\* \* \* \*

We resolved that we would, with divine aid, live near to Christ. We began morning and evening prayers together. We grew, together, slowly and little by little. The dear Jesus led us from one step to another. I attended prayer meetings, and enjoyed them, gained some strength from them, and thus partially acknowledged to others my interest in religious matters.

But still I lacked the 'evidence,' which you wrote about. I knew that there was something to be done and felt; that I must take bolder steps, that I must try harder to walk.

I felt within my own heart that I had not wholly given myself up to Christ; there was a holding back of something. My dear Savior did not have all my heart; there was a partial mental reservation. My mind labored on the Atonement; I could not get a clear perception of it.

About that time —— said, “you ought to go and talk with our pastor.” \* \* \*

I agreed to it all, and thought I would go. The evening came which he appointed each week to see any who desire conversation.

Then came the struggle. I knew I ought to go, not so much for anything man could do or say, as to convince my

own heart that I was in earnest. But oh the stubbornness of the human heart! The hour came. My courage failed. Instead of stopping on my way up, as —— begged me, I went home, heart-guilty.

I labored and struggled on through the last week, wrestling with the evil suggestions of my wicked heart. It would say: "How absurd this going to see Dr. ——! He is not your Savior. Can you not go and pray and enjoy Him, without talking with a minister?" &c. You know how the heart of wickedness will suggest those things most likely to avail.

This was *evidently* to me the "*cross*," which I was then required to take up;



and I felt it so, because I did not gain satisfactory hope and peace.

The Sabbath came. Our pastor preached about the fear of man bringing a snare. It hit my case forcibly. So close was the picture to my feelings, that I almost suspected he had some particular reference to me.

He appointed a half hour, after the meeting that evening, for calls. As I went to the meeting, —— said: "Now be sure and go to Dr. ——'s to-night." I told her I could not go then. I had made up my mind *not* to go *then*.

But as I walked along to meeting, the question came up to me: "Why not go to-night, if ever? If you mean what

you say, if you are in earnest, why put it off? It is unreasonable in you. It is not honest, to acknowledge, as you do, that you are in earnest and mean to follow on to know the Lord, and then flinch thus, because of a little sacrifice of pride."

I prayed in my heart for the Lord to *drive* me to do my duty; and then I concluded I would go. But all through the meeting, the battle was going on within my breast. The old man of sin was suggesting this and that excuse, and each time I prayed to God *to push me on*.

At last the victory was won. The meeting broke up, and I went to Dr. C——'s; talked with him of my feelings; told him where I labored; spoke

of the Atonement, where I stumbled most. He told me all he could; but the point was not reached in my mind. I knelt with him in prayer, and went home.

I gained no light on the difficult points by the interview, as I thought then. But when I got home *I found I had gained a great victory over the old man of sin.* I was very glad I had done so much, and *had committed myself.* It was a sort of anchor to me. After conversation and prayer till near 12 o'clock, I retired.

Yesterday passed away much as other days of late. I thought a good deal, read some, and prayed some. Last night I sat down, as was my usual custom, to read. I took up a little book called

Christian Progress, (and a good book it is, too,) and was reading it and referring to the passages of Scripture cited. Among others there referred to, on the Atonement, was the 3d chapter of Romans 22—26. I read the verses and was somewhat struck with them. They spoke of the pardon of sins past through the forbearance of God; all brought about through the blood of Christ.

But they did not hold my attention longer. I read on, and —— soon joined me. She looked up other passages referred to. She read some from Leviticus, as to the ancient sacrifices, the scapegoat, &c.; and then the corresponding passages in the New Testament as in Hebrews

ix, as to Christ being the substitute for these sacrifices, &c.

All these things gave me a *glimmer* of the truth. I laid the book aside, and lay down upon the sofa. The passage from Romans came back to me. I asked —— to read it again and again. Each time the subject grew brighter and clearer to me. I continued talking with her about it, and reading it again and again. Each time it seemed to afford additional light to my mind.

Clearer and clearer the subject grew. At last I thought I felt differently from what I had ever felt before, but did not suspect that anything important was occurring to me.

But my heart glowed. The tears began to flow. I then said to —— that I felt very peculiarly, that I believed a light was dawning on my mind ; and so it continued to grow *brighter* and *brighter*, clearer and clearer to me. My heart throbbed and glowed with love to Jesus. I saw clearly His love and mercy in laying down His life for me, that through the *sacrifice* I could obtain pardon and peace. The obstacles as to the Atonement *vanished*, melted, in the pure, fervent love of Jesus ; and oh, the comfort, joy, *ecstasy*, of that night, no tongue can express. I was happy, joyous — the name of Jesus filled me with delight. I felt that I could do any thing for that dear

Savior, who had done so much for me; that willingly, yea *joyously* would I depart, and fly to the arms of Jesus. Do you ask me if I “feel sure of my acceptance?”—my glowing heart *shouts* that “I know my Redeemer liveth and because he lives *I shall live also.*” I feared to retire or to move, for fear that the blessed joy might depart. I felt that it could not return. But now this morning I find my dear Redeemer again with open arms to receive me; now my heart glows and burns with love to Him; He is dear and precious to me, my tears will not stay back at my bidding. But I must pause.

Never, *never*, could I have believed this

of myself. *I did not in the least expect it.* I had for some time concluded, as I had always believed, that these exercises were quite as much of the *imagination* as of reality. You know my views upon these points. I had been told that *all* did not have these remarkable passages, and I had entirely given up any thought of it, *and least of all was I thinking of it last night.* Now what is this but a *new birth*? “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” There is nothing here *fanatical*, no *imagination*, and certainly those who know me best will not suspect me of *superstition*,



or of a leaning to religious infatuation. Even ——, calm and scrutinizing as is his mind, would not suspect me of any such tendency.

No! oh, no, it is God's Spirit in the heart. It is real,—it is *genuine*, there is *no mistake about it*. It is the love, the grace of Jesus, dear Jesus, in the soul. It is a foretaste of the joys of eternity; and oh, how blessed! Glorious must be an *eternity* spent with Jesus when freed from this world's clogs, if the foretaste in this wicked body is so dear and precious. Well may it be said, it hath not entered into the heart of man to *conceive* the joys laid up for those who believe in Jesus.

Now I fully realize my dear brother's condition—those words "*dear Jesus,*" "*good Jesus,*" "take me to-night if it is thy will," came from a soul touched with the divine light and effulgence of a brighter world. *He found Jesus,* and I doubt not is enjoying at this very moment joys "unspeakable and full of glory."

How dear the Bible seems to me now, everything that speaks of Jesus. Before this the Bible to me was *dull*. I read it because I knew I ought to, and I would when reading enjoy it in a measure, but I did not rejoice, no, I did not exactly like to read it. But oh how changed! "He forms the man anew."

Volumes, almost, I could write to you. But I know that I have already written more than I ought. Excuse my ardor and minuteness. I have written as much for myself as for you, my heart is so full; but I thought you would be glad to hear from me, and oh! I can assure you I rejoice to be able to write you as I have. I don't feel as if I wanted to do anything else—business seems an interruption to me. Oh, if our dear B. could have lived, and we all have been Christians together, how blessed it would have been! But “God's ways are not our ways.” Perhaps if he had not been stricken down, we should all now be unconcerned and unpardoned.

As you said, so say I, "now comes the struggle, the battle with the world." It is harder for me than for you. I am more brought in contact with the world. I have an unruly temper to curb; an impatient spirit to check.

BUT JESUS IS STRONG. Pray for me.

Write me very soon. I want to hear that —— has come out strong. I fully believe that he will. Jesus will touch his heart in a way he knows not of, if he will but give himself up to Him.

\* \* \* \*

He must and will yet have that glow of faith which can only come from the touch of the finger of God in the heart.

\* \* \* \*

That God may bless and preserve you  
is the prayer of yours,

Affectionately,

E. L. CUMMINGS.

The inquiry would naturally arise, on reading these glowing words: "How long will all this last? Will these feelings be permanent, ripening into principles, and developed in action? or will it all pass away, like so many supposed conversions?"

We can easily imagine such queries, in the minds of anxious but hopeful friends, who read these glowing words when first written. Similar doubts may

have been expressed in another spirit, by some who heard his prompt and public testimony to the power of grace and the preciousness of Christ:

The grace of God furnished a most satisfactory answer to all such questions, by enabling him to show, to the end of life, a constant progress in Christian feeling, and a growing activity of Christian living.

The question of permanence had indeed another, and to us most painful answer, from the *Providence* of God, in relation to the earthly continuance and development of that new Christian character. Its commencement strengthened our faith, and encouraged our hopes.

And if those hopes were sadly disappointed by the early and sudden disappearance of that light, yet for a season we greatly rejoiced in its clearness and usefulness.

Even now it has not gone out; but shines above, in perpetual brightness, as the stars forever and ever. May God bless this humble endeavor to prolong and extend its illuminating influence on earth; that many other young men may be guided by it, and in turn be reckoned among the lights of the world.

Writing to a friend a week later, he says:

“How the heart, changed, warms to-

wards the fellow Christian! I have been almost overwhelmed with the warmest congratulations of acquaintances and strangers. I am still very happy and joyous in my feelings. I bless the Lord every day for his kindness and love in leading me to Him.

“Last Sunday evening I acknowledged my Savior publicly before a crowded meeting. Last night we (the young men) formed a Bible class, and also a prayer meeting for young men connected with the congregation. You see the people of God are doing something here, and you will soon, if I mistake not, see fruits. My whole heart is in the Cause, and with God’s help I mean to press on.”



A few days later he wrote as follows to a friend in Boston :

PORTLAND, March 26.

JAMES W. K——, Esq.,

DEAR SIR:—Your kind note accompanying the bundle of “Christian Ammunition,” came duly to hand. Permit me to thank you from my heart for your kind expressions and also for these tracts.

I can assure you that my heart is in our common Cause, the service of that blessed Jesus who died that I might have life.

I am every day astonished at the change God has, in His infinite love, brought about in my feelings, but I am

more surprised that I have lived thirty-one years without having appreciated and received the blessed change before, it now seems so simple and plain. Remember me in your prayers, and believe me as ever,

Yours, most truly,

E. L. CUMMINGS.

Writing to a friend, April 3d, he says :  
“I am very happy in Jesus ; have no wish to undo what I have done ; feel better and better satisfied every day, that I have taken the right step.”

May 7th, 1858, he writes : “ ——, and myself were received into the church, with twelve others, last Sabbath. \* \*

There were but few dry eyes in the church. *We were very happy.* Oh, what a change for us! who would have believed it three months since? But I am rejoiced to thank God daily and almost hourly for his love and goodness in thus leading us. His is a blessed service.

I would not give my feeble hope for all this world can afford. There is a joy and satisfaction in religion which the world's pleasures can never begin to furnish. A soul reconciled and subdued to the will of its Maker! It is a blessed thing; and oh, how could we live on so long, thoughtless, disobedient, and unthankful to God, for all his sacrifice for us; and when, too, we were every day

and hour exposed to immediate death, and all unprepared to die—the thought is dreadful! But, thank God, we have now a hope which is like an anchor, sure and steadfast. The good work goes steadily forward here.”

June 2d. He says: “Keep good courage, be of good cheer, for your sins are forgiven. That is cause for joy. The Lord will take care of us. I am just learning to put my burdens on the Lord. I am much less distressed about troublesome affairs than ever before, and I mean to be troubled less and less, by God’s aid. It is my constant prayer to be relieved, but if not, to bear all joyfully, knowing it is the Lord, and He will not

give any more stripes than is necessary. He is a good Master, and I love His service more and more every day."

Under date of Oct 14th: "My trust is in the Lord; there is little but misery in this cold world, but the promise is to him that overcometh. I do always remember you in my prayers; pray for me."

As appears from one of these extracts, Mr. Cummings was not long in making known his love to Christ, and developing, in a new and useful life, the principles of action he had now so warmly adopted.

The very next evening (Tuesday) after his joyful change of feeling, de-

scribed in the letter of March 2d, his pastor, whose hopes had been greatly raised by the interview on Sabbath evening, was cheered,—hardly surprised,—on his return from a day's absence, to hear him say, at the close of a meeting: "I have found the Savior since I saw you."

Very soon he said the same in a praying circle; and, soon after, bore his testimony in the crowded morning meetings then just commencing.

Without that long delay, often so perilous to the usefulness and spiritual peace of recent converts, Mr. C. joined himself in covenant with the people of God, and obeyed that late command of the Savior

while lingering in the flesh : " Do this in remembrance of me."

Never was he sorry, and never were others sorry, that he so early assumed the position of avowed Christian discipleship.

Doubtless he was sanctified but in part. Yet if others saw the imperfections which he both feared and confessed, his pastor at least can say, as at the funeral, that they have not come to his ears. And we have testimony, full and hearty, and from sources not prejudiced by sympathy with his religious hopes and joys, that he exhibited a striking change.

What he was in the church, the Sabbath school, and the social meeting, hund-

reds of loving, aching hearts could witness when he was taken from us.

Among the young men in this community, whom we may suppose Jesus loved, and who, no longer lacking the one thing needful, have begun to love Jesus, he stood conspicuous, a brother beloved by them, and by the household of faith.

This affection he fully reciprocated. This new alliance he fully and cheerfully recognized.

Next to his beloved family, the church were his kindred, and the house of God his home.

He loved all those who loved his Savior; and entered warmly into all those



“union” arrangements, over one of which he was to have presided the very week of his burial.

Yet he felt that he had special family relations, and home duties, with that branch of Christ's church to which he had joined himself. He cheerfully conformed to all its rules, and enjoyed its ordinances. Its stated meetings were his delight.

He did not forsake the assembling together of Christ's people, whoever might assemble elsewhere, or for what ever purpose.

If he was not in his own seat on the Sabbath, we knew that he was not wandering in the indulgence of mere curios-

ity, or without some good reason, to other Christian folds.

And if he was not with his young associates in the vestry, on Sabbath or Friday evening, or in the Lecture room, in that, now alas!—too well remembered seat, on Tuesday evening, we knew it was no private visiting, nor public entertainment, that prevented.

Even on the night of his last arrival at home from a journey, only the pressure of incipient disease kept him from a meeting for social and religious purposes. That meeting was associated in his mind with some preliminary processes of thought, and habits of intercourse, the winter before his great change. “I want

to know," he said, "how it will seem, for us to meet in the 'association,' as *Christians*."

Closely connected with this feature of Mr. Cummings' religious character, was his readiness to perform whatever active duties the church put upon him, as circumstances and opportunities required at his hands, as an enlisted soldier of the Cross.

He never put himself unduly forward: and he never, needlessly, excused himself. All were glad to hear him, in prayer or exhortation, at social meetings. Yet his modesty made it more of an effort to himself, than his ease and fluency would have led us to suppose.

The Sabbath school was his favorite Sabbath-morning resort; first, as one of a circle for mutual instruction; and then, as a teacher greatly endeared to his class by a brief term of kind and earnest labor.

On Committees, on a Council, and in many other, unofficial, ways, he was ever standing in his lot. His frequent and fearless conversations, in the house, the office, and the street, and the travelling conveyance, were confirmed and made impressive by the whole tone and spirit of his life.

It must have been noticed by the careful reader, that even in that first glowing description of his own change, written

the next evening after its occurrence, he alludes to a dear and honored friend, whom he longed to see as safe and happy as himself.

Of another, not less dear and honored, he writes in one of his last letters home: "I would that —— would take *one step forward*, and come into the glorious liberty of the children of God. But unless she does take that step, she will be all her life-time subject to bondage. Say so from me. The more we rely, and are compelled to, upon Jesus, the sweeter the rest."

As was the beginning and the ending, so, in this respect, was the whole, of his Christian course. He never asked, in-

dolently and indifferently: "Am I my brother's keeper?" And some Christian brethren can testify to his readiness, even anticipating their more tardy movements, to secure seasons of social prayer in hotel chambers, on long journeys.

Many are the sad though pleasant memories that gather, to some of us, around the journey to Detroit, at the Missionary Anniversary in September, 1858.

What remains to be said, before coming to the last sad yet triumphant scene, may appropriately refer to *the distinctively CHRISTIAN nature of our brother's faith and experience.*

Here had been, with him, as with most

others, previous to the teaching and renewing work of the Spirit, the weak point. Christ is indeed, to many, "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;" "a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness."

It had been so with Mr. Cummings. Admitting, in general terms, the Gospel doctrine, he had long been perplexed as to the *way of salvation*, through Him who has said: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Never will his pastor forget an interview with him, during the short and fatal illness of his beloved brother, Mr. Benjamin Chandler Cummings, to which he refers so touchingly in the letter above cited.

He was repeating, in another room, the words of instruction and encouragement which he had addressed to his suffering kinsman; referring to the prodigal's welcome from a forgiving father, &c., when his pastor said: "I am glad you could say this, and so well, but how I wish you could have gone farther, and spoken to him of CHRIST, and the way of pardon through his sacrifice upon the Cross."

"That,"—he replied with characteristic simplicity and frankness,—“That is a point I could never understand, myself.”

The brother, taught of God, soon learned this “great mystery of godliness;” and his fervent prayers, glowing descrip-



tions of the joy of faith, and peaceful falling asleep in Jesus, doubtless had much to do with the subsequent religious history of the surviving brother, as of other dear friends.

When he too began to say: "Whereas I was blind, now I see," it was "Jesus" whom he saw; Jesus a Savior, as well as himself a sinner. "Precious," "Blessed," "Dear," and other epithets of love and adoration were ever ready when speaking or writing of his new found Savior.

What more than that first Christian letter, did we need, to open a window in his breast, through which we could see the operations of that Holy Spirit, who "forms the man anew," and of whom

Christ says: "He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you"? That was indeed CHRISTIAN. All, of CHRIST.

When once the great mystery, "God manifest in the flesh," a divine, atoning Savior, was solved, to his mind, by the demonstration of the Spirit, and the vision of faith, thenceforth his motto, like that of the old martyrs, was: "None but Christ; none but Christ!" It would have been the same, I am sure, at the stake.

As, on that first bright morning of his new life, he wrote: "My theme is Jesus—blessed name—dear and precious to my soul;—my glowing heart shouts that I know my Redeemer liveth;" and as,

amidst the gathering shades of his life's early evening, he could say: "I am Christ's; He took me last March. Blessed Savior;" so, through the intervening months he said, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."

He spoke of Christ. He read of Christ. He sung of Christ. He prayed to Christ. He trusted in Christ. His religious experience was emphatically a Christian experience. His "growing in grace" was a growing in "the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

In one of his last letters when away from home, he says: "Christ is my dear companion. He is ever with me; my

constant source of comfort. Pray for me." And in another: "I find Jesus very precious to me, and His love very comforting."

Such was his "ripening." What more rapidly fits us to be gathered among the saints, as good wheat is garnered, than a growing knowledge and love and likeness to Him, who is "the life of all *their* joys," and whose name "sounds sweet from every string" of *their* golden harps?

It tends also,—it did in his case,—to keep the ripening grain from the rust and mildew of false doctrine; to preserve the believer from the delusions of Satan, and from those follies and inconsistencies which sadly damage the reputation and

turn to nought, or even to mischief, the influence of some professed Christians.

During his last absence from home, he thus writes: "I never felt so unwilling to commence a journey; and for a long time on the road to Albany, was very unhappy.

"But I found a remedy in the Bible. I opened to the 4th chapter of Philipians. The 6th, and following verses met my wants perfectly: 'Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

“Verse 11th, ‘For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,’ comforted me very much; and I found courage and strength from the 13th verse: ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’

“How wonderful is the Bible! And how long I have lived and never known its adaptation to the heart’s desires and the spirit’s sorrows. Blessed be God for the Bible. It is full of good cheer. More and more do I prize the religion of Jesus.

\* \* \* \*

“Tell the dear children, papa thinks of them very often, and prays for them.

\* \* \* \*

“One has to go from home to find out how happy we are at home. \* \* \*

"I long to fly home to those pleasant hours; with wife and children around, and God over all. Pray for me." \* \*

What a comfort, as we read again these almost last written words of one so dear, that God is still over all. May our hearts cheerfully, though in sadness add, "Blessed forevermore."

During the same period of absence, he wrote from Chicago: "God is good; very good, and His presence dear to me.

\*               \*               \*               \*

"Pray for me and for yourself. I *be-*  
*lieve in prayer.*               \*               \*               \*

"I am much exhausted, but shall be able to get home if the Lord, my only trust, help me."

He did "get home;" but it was only a resting place for a few weary and suffering days, on the way to a still brighter home.

His failing strength allowed him to enjoy one communion season; the first in the year. He spoke with much feeling of what was said on that occasion, as to the probability that some of the four hundred communicants would die during the year.

Little did he or we suppose, even then, that the allusion made to his name, at his baptism, eight months before, would be so painfully brought to our minds before the next communion season.



Having truly "walked with God," he "was not, for God took him."

Now we come to the end: rather, the *beginning*, to him, of a new and yet more joyful life.

Seized, somewhat like his beloved brother, on returning from a similar journey, he had a strong impression that he should soon follow him, on man's last journey, to the grave.

Almost his last mental strength while yet unclouded by the fearful "typhoid," was devoted to arrangements in view of his death; arrangements for which, though then regarded as premature and the result of a morbid apprehension, no suitable opportunity would afterwards have been found.

Over the last days we pass hastily ; though their hours sped wearisomely to many, even outside the inner circle of his dear home. They heard tidings of alternate cloud and sunshine in his mind, as the disease moved on to its fatal termination.

Sunshine, however, predominated. Even his delirium for the most part took a bright coloring from the peace and joy of his renewed heart.

The following are a few of his words of love and trust, as he approached the dark valley and the shining gate :

“If I die tell them I trusted in Christ.”

“It is past my comprehension that I should ever be led to seek the Lord. Is it not wonderful ?”

On the Sabbath, "This is the day of our Lord. Blessed day and blessed Savior. He is very precious to me."

"I am Christ's, he took me last March."

The day before his death, "Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Christ is precious."

His last intelligible words were, looking up and smiling sweetly, "I am running a race, *and I am winning.*" Yes, WINNING. "The goal is reached, and HEAVEN is won!"

We might well imagine him, adopting as his own the following lines from "Lyra Germanica," now some two centuries old:

"Then I have conquered: then at last,  
My course is run: good night!  
I am well pleased that it is past,  
A thousand times good night.

But ye dear friends, whom I must leave,  
Look not thus anxiously.  
Why should ye thus lament and grieve ?  
It standeth well with me."

Such was the "ripening" and the "gathering," of this early fruit in the "wonderful year:" a year to be known, we trust, as only the *beginning* of "The Great Awakening" in the 19th Century.

Those who love to trace the connection between cause and effect, in the spiritual as well as in the natural world, will have noticed how the removal of a dear brother, with its various circumstances, evidently prepared the way for a similar happy change in him whose religious history has now been sketched. One broth-

er seems to have been "a kind of first fruits" of the other's conversion and dying testimony for Jesus.

Not less touching to the hearts of many, was the believing joy, soon followed by dying peace, of a third "young lawyer," Mr. Cummings' companion on the journey to Detroit above mentioned; on whom his frequent conversations and especially his happy death, and the above letter read at his funeral, evidently exerted much influence.

How much, is known only to Him who knoweth all hearts. But the death scene, following so soon the one just described suggested more than the general identity of all true Christian experience. To those

who knew all the circumstances, a special resemblance was visible, which showed, that the one friend was, however unconsciously, helpful to the other.

Viewed in this light, as in a measure the result of Mr. C.'s fidelity, and of his Savior's kindness and faithfulness manifested to him, Mr. M.'s joyful "clinging" to Christ was highly consolatory, as to the lamented removal of each.

It is not often that three young men, personal friends, of the same profession, and members of the same congregation, are called within a few months, to leave each a widowed and fatherless household, and a sorrowing community, for the joy of beholding, face to face, a Savior so recently recognized and appreciated.









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